EAST BAY FAMILY DEFENDERS

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DEFENSE SOCIAL WORK: BUILDING COLLABORATIVE CASE STRATEGIES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Identify at least 2:

- ways that defense-oriented social workers quickly build rapport with parents.
- strategies for conducting client assessment as part of developing a legal strategy.
- steps to develop defense-oriented case strategy
 with the parent and attorney.
- ways collaboration between parent, legal team
 and caseworker can increase parent engagement.

ORIENT YOURSELF TO THE CASE

- What's going on with the parent now and what happened in the case so far?
- What type of hearing is next and when is it?
- What is the legal goal for the next hearing? What is the overall legal goal?
- What is the Department concerned about?

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Why does the lawyer think the representation would benefit from attorney/social worker collaboration?



TECHNIQUES FOR QUICK RAPPORT BUILDING WITH CLIENTS

- Warm handoff from Attorney to SW
- Clearly communicate who you are and your role
 - Review attorney/client privilege Mandated Reporting *explanation*
 - Working with you is voluntary
 - Repeat
- Name that trust often takes time to build AND there are tight court timelines
- Get active and follow through
- Get curious with Parent Look together at "What's really going on here?"



DEFENSE-ORIENTED ASSESSMENT

Reality Check the Presenting Problem and the Assessment of the Parent

- Best assessment occurs over the course of many
- For some of the more personal or potentially triggering questions, develop rapport over time to gradually explore.
- Explore sources of strength for families that can be overlooked or misunderstood, e.g., religious beliefs/rituals.

IS THE CASE PLAN APPROPRIATE AND ACHIEVABLE?

- What is your relationship like with the Caseworker?
- What is your understanding of your case plan requirements?
- Are the services being offered to you by the Department meeting your needs? If not, why not?

 What additional supports, if any, might be helpful?

 Are you facing any barriers to meeting your case plan goals?



DEVELOPING CASE STRATEGY AS DEFENSE SOCIAL WORKER

Articulate Parent's Protective Capacities:

(See ABA Child Safety Guide for Judges & Attorneys)

- **Cognitive** knowledge, understanding and perceptions contributing to protective vigilance.
- **Behavioral** actions, activities, and performance that result in protective vigilance.
- **Emotiona**l- feelings, attitudes and identification with the child and motivation resulting in protective vigilance.

Decide how to frame:

- Presenting Problem
- How Best to Address the Issues





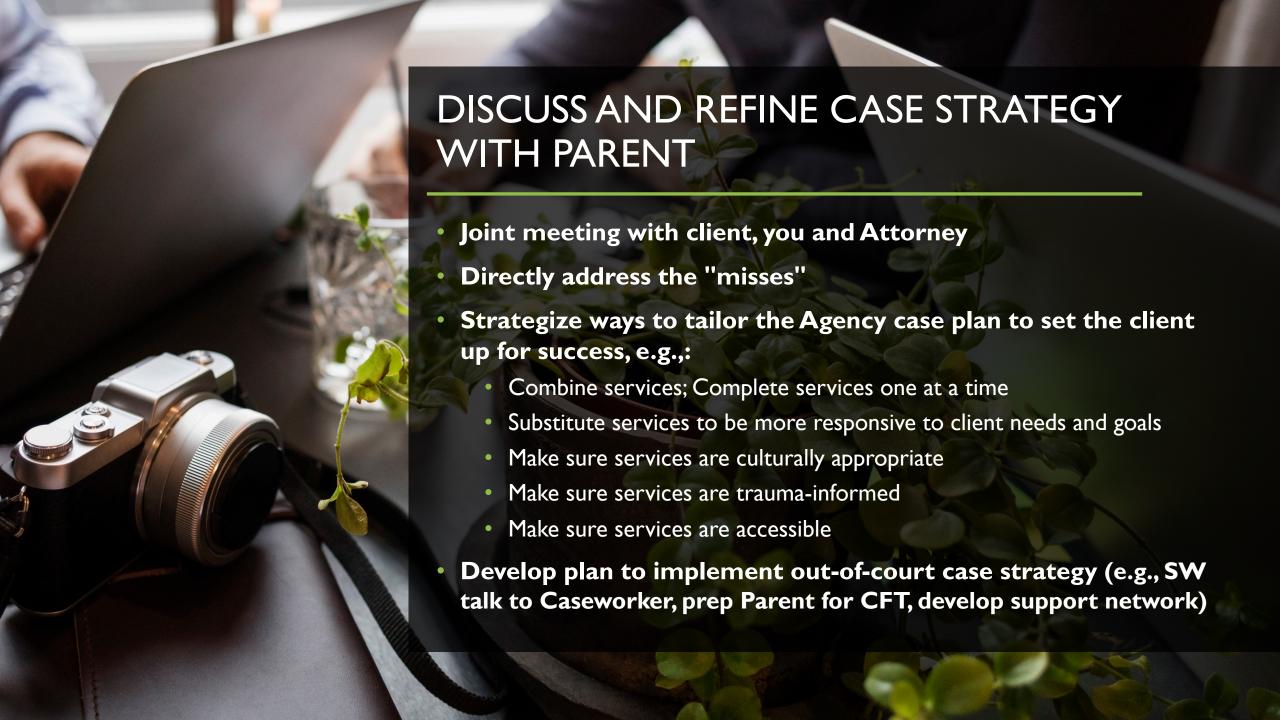


DEVELOPING CASE STRATEGY WITH ATTORNEY

1) Assess impact of "misses" on legal case.

Misses = Differences in perceptions of parent's capacities, safety risks to child(ren), and needed services.

- 2) Strategize how to address these "misses"
 - SERVICE MISSES:
 - Advocate for individualized services
 - MISS IN PERCEPTION OF PARENT'S CAPACITIES:
 - Litigate/do not litigate pros/cons
 - MISS IN PERCEPTION OF SAFETY RISK TO CHILDREN:
 - Develop concrete action items to show mitigation of risk (e.g., safety plan, demonstrate boundaries)



DEFENSE SOCIAL WORKER COLLABORATION WITH AGENCY SOCIAL WORKER / CWW

- Acknowledge that defense Social Worker is part of legal team
 - Information sharing can sometimes only go one way (reality of attorney/client confidentiality)
 - Relationship with Parent in inherently different (duty of loyalty v. multiple perspectives held by Department Caseworker)
- Name shared goals
- Encourage Caseworker to loop you in and call on you for help
- Invite collaboration in service of...
 - Increased client engagement with the worker
 - Increased client engagement in case plan



STAY CONNECTED

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